

make no sacrifices to procure his release. Thus the doctrine of service, sincerely held and unswervingly applied, helped to veil if not to span the gulf between politics and ethics. The eighteenth century with its rationalistic humanitarianism and its trio of enlightened autocrats, Frederick the Great, Catherine the Great and Joseph II, supplied the most suitable stage for the application of the gospel of *raison d'état* in its better aspects as well as its worse. The era of the religious wars, fought at any rate nominally for ideal ends, was over, and the influence of educated public opinion had hardly begun.

The enduring vitality of *The Prince* cannot be airily dismissed as a regrettable token of human depravity. Its teaching has been watered down in the course of the centuries, but a sediment of the Florentine gospel is left in numberless thinkers of the last four centuries who bear a better name. In Acton's learned Introduction to Burd's edition of *The Prince*, and in Meinecke's massive treatise *Die Idee der Staatsraison*, we are confronted with a serried array of authorities, some of them of high repute, who, while rejecting the grosser features of the system, argue that, public and private morals are not and can never be quite the same; that supreme emergencies call for exceptional methods; that Machiavelli is useful as medicine, though indigestible if consumed as our daily bread. We recall Cavour's revealing cry of distress while he was putting Italy on the map: "What rascals we should be if we did for ourselves what we do for our country!" However lofty our political ideals, however firm our moral principles, we cannot shirk the rude challenge of *The Prince*. Can rulers, 'must rulers, invariably attempt to apply the moral law, as the private citizen in civilized communities is rightly expected to do? Or is the art of government, to borrow a phrase of Nietzsche,

beyond good and evil?

To realize the full strength of Machiavellian philosophy let me summarize Meinecke's presentation of the case. *Raison d'état* tells the statesman what he must do in order to maintain the state in health and strength. The striving for power and possession is a primitive, indeed an animal, instinct, as strong in the individual as in the herd. With man it does not confine itself to the physical needs and satisfactions of life, for the horizon widens with his ascent. On the other hand, as he climbs the ladder of civilization and begins to organize his social life, he becomes aware that he must reckon with morality and law. Between Kratos and Ethos, between the craving